

Robert Pete Williams

SOUNDS
2081
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Blues Masters



Blues Masters

Robert Pete Williams



1. *DOCTOR BLUES*
(R.P. Williams) 3:07
2. *GOT ON HIS MIND*
(R.P. Williams) 5:14
3. *MEET HIM OVER IN
PARADISE*
(R.P. Williams) 3:41
4. *GOODBYE BABY*
(R.P. Williams) 5:03
5. *IT'S GOTTA BE JELLY
'CAUSE JAM DON'T
SHAKE THATAWAY*
(R.P. Williams) 3:30
6. *SHE WALKED AROUND
WITH HER MOUTH
POKED*
(R.P. Williams) 3:04
7. *I NEED TO BE LOVED*
(R.P. Williams) 2:54
8. *BLUES LEAVE ME
ALONE*
(R.P. Williams) 3:19
9. *TEXAS BLUES*
(R.P. Williams) 3:12
10. *TALKIN' BLUES*
(R.P. Williams) 13:26
11. *GREYHOUND BUS*
(R.P. Williams) 3:13
12. *PUT ON A SHOW*
(R.P. Williams) 3:18
13. *TAKE IT ALONG WITH
YOU EVERYWHERE YOU
GO*
(R.P. Williams) 3:25
14. *LATE NIGHT BOOGIE*
(R.P. Williams) 3:10

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Total playing time: 59:36

COMPACT
disc

STORYVILLE

STCD 8001

BLUES MASTERS, Vol. 1-12
Vol. 1
ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS
STCD 8001
Vol. 2
BIG JOE WILLIAMS
STCD 8002
Vol. 3
JOHN HENRY BARBEE
STCD 8003
Vol. 4
LONNIE JOHNSON
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Vol. 10
OTIS SPANN
STCD 8010
Vol. 11
SPECKLED RED
STCD 8011
Vol. 12
SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON
STCD 8012

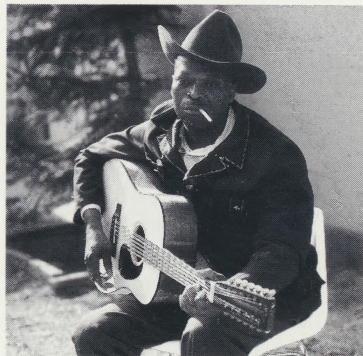
1. *DOCTOR BLUES (a)*
(R.P. Williams) 3:07
2. *GOT ON HIS MIND (c)*
(R.P. Williams) 5:14
3. *MEET HIM OVER IN
PARADISE (b)*
(R.P. Williams) 3:41
4. *GOODBYE BABY (c)*
(R.P. Williams) 5:03
5. *IT'S GOTTA BE JELLY
'CAUSE JAM DON'T
SHAKE THATAWAY (b)*
(R.P. Williams) 3:30
6. *SHE WALKED AROUND
WITH HER MOUTH
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7. *I NEED TO BE LOVED (b)*
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ALONE (b)*
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9. *TEXAS BLUES (a)*
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10. *TALKIN' BLUES (b)*
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12. *PUT ON A SHOW (a)*
(R.P. Williams) 3:18
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YOU EVERYWHERE YOU
GO (b)*
(R.P. Williams) 3:25
14. *LATE NIGHT BOOGIE (a)*
(R.P. Williams) 3:10

PERSONNEL:

- (a) Robert Pete Williams, 12-string guitar and vocal.
(b) Robert Pete Williams, 6-string guitar and vocal.
(c) Add Big Joe Williams, kazoo.

Recorded, Copenhagen, March 20, 1972.
Executive Producer: Karl Emil Knudsen.
Engineered by Ivar Rosenberg.
Photo: Storyville Archive.
Layout: Chris Olesen.

Track 1-5 and 9-11 were originally issued on Storyville SLP 225 'Robert Pete Williams with Big Joe Williams'. Track 6-8 and 12-14 are previously unissued. The liner notes were written in 1972 by Derrick Stewart-Baxter and appeared originally on Storyville SLP 225. Robert Pete Williams was born on March 14, 1914 and died December 31, 1980.



The blues are changing constantly, and this is right and proper, for any art that remains static must die eventually. However, while the scene changes from decade to decade, it would be fatal to forget or dismiss what has gone before. Fatal, for example, to ignore the singers in the pure rural style, or those wonderful pioneers of what was to become the Urban style, the Bluebird-Victor singers. Like wine they ripen and mature with age (or at least the records they made still remain valid). Therefore as the veterans fade into the past, it is to be hoped that younger men, like Larry Johnson, will continue to keep alive with their versions, the songs and styles of a bygone age. This is essential. After all one does not ignore Beethoven, Bach or Brahms because Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Ravel appeared!

What is worrying about the modern scene, with its overloud electronic sounds, is the banality of so much of the material, mostly based on pop music. The blues until a few years ago have always dealt with life and its problems; there have been songs of love, hate, the unfaithful man or woman, blues about travelling the lonesome roads of the Southern states, political blues and songs of protest. In fact blues covering an extremely wide range of subject matter. It is remarkable and rather saddening to find that in these troubled times, particularly for the black man in the United States, there are so few songs dealing with the more serious aspects of life. About living conditions, prejudice, poverty and such things as Watergate. The late J. B. Lenoir, seems to have been the last real protester. What we get today in the main is tired blues about unreal people in very unreal love. Trying for the big hit (and who can blame an artist for trying to make as much money as he can?), inevitably leads to a lowering of artistic standards. Moreover, it is sickening to

hear white adolescents screaming what they fondly imagine is the real blues.

It is therefore most welcome to turn to the music of the older men for satisfaction. Men like the subject of this LP – Robert Pete Williams, a fine guitarist and singer. Williams possesses that little extra something that so many artists lack. It is hard to pin down just what that something is. A deep feeling for his music? Yes, most certainly, but there is much more to him than this essential quality. I think perhaps the correct word is intensity. When really into his songs, this man becomes almost possessed and at times, the effect he produces becomes almost too much for the average listener.

Little is known of his history. He was born on March 14, 1914 in Zachary, Louisiana. His family were share croppers, earning a meagre living from the land. Pete worked hard, long hours and was unable to attend school, he picked cotton, cut canes and did much back breaking work on the farms around the neighbourhood. In 1928 he moved to Scotlandville, which is a Negro community quite close to Baton Rouge. Here he worked in a lumber yard for several years, and later he got a humble job washing and cleaning barrels.

In 1934, always attracted by music, he taught himself to play guitar, and his first instrument (like so many of his fellow artists) was a crude affair made out of five copper strings and a cigar box. Later by careful saving of his money he was able to buy himself a better instrument. As he told me, "Music just took hold of me and I just couldn't stop – I seemed to pluck it right out of the air. It haunted me. I can play church songs and all, and I am a very religious man. Blues is my life and I just can't stop playing them".

For many years Williams was confined to prison

"A lifer" for murder, and it is more than probable that this enforced stay in Penitentiary helped to purify his blues – away from the influence of Radio and TV (although he must have heard much on the prison radio) he sang for himself and his comrades.

It seems unbelievable that this quiet, gentle man could have committed any violent crime and perhaps in the deep south of that time Pete was framed – I would like to think this was the case. This man, who is now back in the world singing for us, is a beautiful human being, and the beauty comes out in his work – even his grim songs of hardship and prison life have an austere radiance that few singers have ever equalled.

THE SONGS –

"Doctor Blues". A very sad song about sickness; "Lawd, I'm goin' down slow, Lawd there's somethin' wrong with me", sings Robert Pete. There is certainly nothing cheerful about this very moving blues. His 12-string guitar moans and cries a heart-rending blues.

"Got On His Mind". This track also has Big Joe Williams on kazoo. The two men create a most exciting atmosphere. This is really a very ordinary blues that comes alive when these two men start digging in very deeply. A traditional kind of song with lyrics as old as the blues themselves!

"Meet Him Over In Paradise". This is a really superb performance. Robert Pete's hoarse voice cries out his troubles to an uncaring world. His guitar is more than just an accompaniment, it is a second voice.

"Goodbye Baby". This brings back Joe Williams and his kazoo. It is a blues about a man about to go on his travels and leave his girl; "Goodbye, Baby, I hate to leave you, but I got to go", he sings. Just another man gone down the road!

"It's Gotta Be Jelly, 'Cause Jam Don't Shake That-away". A very light hearted blues on a sexual theme. This title has been used numerous times by swing bands – but this is a very different cup of tea, or plate of jelly! Pete contrives to make this blues into a serious song about sex.

"Texas Blues". Of all the blues about places and Texas in particular, this must be one of the best. A country man singing about cows and horses and such-like. Williams sings about what he knows best.

"Talkin' Blues". This is without a doubt the most inspired track on the LP. Here Pete talks about his life, with his guitar making musical comments. Robert Pete's talking blues have always been a feature of his work. I consider this to be one of his finest. Here is a part of his life laid out before us. One can only sit back and listen. A man telling his story. A man who has come close to the electric chair (and he tells us about it). This is what I mean about intensity. A gripping and shattering performance.

"Greyhound Bus". In the life of the travelling man, trains and buses play a big part. Here Robert Pete and Joe Williams (with his kazoo) tell us about the Greyhound Bus.

Here then, is Robert Pete Williams, a man who has known what it is to suffer – a man that has a compulsive urge to sing the blues. Treasure him. He passes this way, but once.

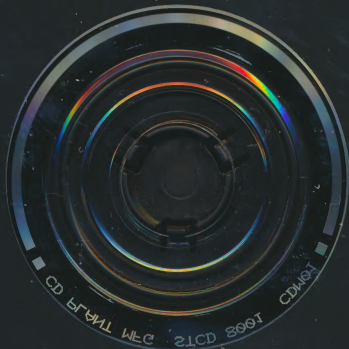
DERRICK STEWART-BAXTER

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Blues Masters

VOL. 1



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